
EDITORIAL

Recently, a complaint by Dr Jill Tarter, of the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence Institute, to a web site which headlined a contribution from her describing SETI's work as 'searching for UFOs', was brought to the attention of the Internet UFO forum, UFO Updates. Tarter wrote that 'SETI is scientific and credible, and UFO claims and studies are not'. This caused much foaming at the mouth and chewing of carpets among the list's mainly American, mainly ETH, subscribers. Bob Young defended Tarter against the attacks and was in turn attacked by Jerome Clark for writing a favourable review of Curtis Peebles's 'dishonest and even plagiaristic book' (*Watch the Skies!*). Some ETHers got even more bad-tempered. One wrote: 'Welcome to the UFO Hall of Frauds, Dirtbags, Dupes and Morons, Jill . . . '

Of course, Jill Tarter is right. If she reads a UFO book or attends a UFO conference she is almost certain to encounter the ravings of the ETH-obsessed and the lecture-circuit liars. In an article written some years ago Tarter described searching for ETI signals as being like looking for a needle in a haystack. The same analogy could be applied to an outsider seeking genuinely scientific ufologists.

ENTIRELY DISPOSED

Martin S. Kottmeyer

Ten years ago, January 1990, an essay of mine titled 'Entirely Unprejudiced' was published in *Magonia*. It brought together three claims by ufologists that UFO and abduction case material was without cultural provenance. No ready psychosocial explanations existed for such things as the shape of flying saucers, the nature of the Greys, or the Hill abduction case; they felt. This meant extraterrestrials newly came to our world in 1947. These claims provided a dialectical opportunity to showcase material I had run across in my enjoyment of science fiction and discoveries I made in correspondence with fellow UFO buffs. The discoveries were largely serendipitous things, the outcome of eclectic recreational consumption of both science fiction and UFO literature rather than concerted research. As many SF buffs hold ufology to be beneath notice and UFO buffs tend to obsess on their subject to the exclusion of SF, I was in a rare position to be aware of enough of both fields to see the overlap that existed between them.

'Entirely Unprejudiced' was well regarded and it is one of my more widely cited articles. It has prompted praise and has led to the flattery that I am an expert in science fiction. I didn't care to disabuse people of that notion though I knew that hundreds of SF buffs consumed far more and were more intensely involved in the subject. That I had only scratched the surface would be apparent to everyone these days if it wasn't for the fact that Michel Meurger's book *Scientifictions no. 1/1* (Encrage, 1995) is available only in French and his 'Surgeons from Outside' English piece is trapped in the expensive *Fortean Studies* No. 3. More than I, Meurger has shown the massive foreshadowing of UFO mythology in pulp science fiction and cultural tradition. His work is to mine as a miner's long day is to a pleasant stroll down the lane.

There has been some recent criticism of my essay that I wish to comment on here. Anthony R. Brown, in the latest issue of *Magonia* (October 2000), refers to the part of the essay dealing with observations by me suggesting that *Invaders from Mars* was one of the influences on Betty Hill's

nightmare. He asserts I went 'to extraordinary lengths to claim that a specific film was the origin of their experience. There are two important points that are never addressed in such assertions. The first is that there is not a single case from the decades of sleep and dream research where a film has been partially duplicated by subsequent dreaming . . . dream imagery and story are always different from the film. The emotional tone might be virtually identical in both film and subsequent dream, but never the imagery and story.'

Brown offers no sources for this claim but I know it is false from personal experience. I've had movie imagery reflected in my dreams on more than occasion. Once, after seeing *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, I had a surreal dream of pods identical from the film being fired like artillery shells in a war. Army trucks were also present like near the end of that film. I also know it is false from reading Robert L. van de Castle's *Our Dreaming Mind* (Ballantine, 1994, p. 241). He describes two studies by D. Foulkes of individuals being shown a pair of films and determining their effect on content. The first study indicated it was extremely obvious to judges in 5 per cent of the dreams whether a western or neutral romantic comedy had been seen. In the second study, Foulkes is reported as saying 8 per cent of the dreams incorporated elements from the pre-sleep film. Never say never.

I also recommend Kelly Bulkeley's *The Wilderness of Dreams* (State U. of NY Press, 1994, pp. 188-9) for that author's discussion of a dream of being dissected by an evil alien. The influence of the film *Excalibur*, recently seen, was evident in the presence of knights in the early part of the nightmare. Bulkeley also indicated having had heart-pounding dreams of being chased by Darth Vader, whose source in movie imagery is beyond doubt. Brown's claim was scarcely believable from the standpoint of observations that have existed for over a century noting that dreams incorporate imagery from memory in distorted form (Freud, Sigmund, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Avon, 1965, pp. 44-55). Given that films do enter our memories, how could they be immune from use by dreams?

Brown's use of the phrase 'partially duplicated' seems to indicate he thinks my assertion of influence involves a precise replay of the film in Betty's dream, but let me quote 'Entirely Unprejudiced' to refresh his memory. 'The match between *Invaders from Mars* and Betty Hill's nightmares is imperfect and obviously has none of the rigour of a mathematical equation. Dreams and nightmares by their nature are almost never veridical memories. Even if Betty Hill was really abducted it would be unusual for her nightmares to be a photographic replay of her trauma. The felt emotions would resurface, but it would bear only a metaphoric similarity in its dramatic content. The most one would generally expect is snatches of unique imagery to help in the piecing together of the sources the dream spun off of. It is something of a wonder that enough elements exist of this character . . . to make an identification that can be called convincing.'

It should also be noticed, contra Brown, that I don't assert the film is the origin of Betty's nightmares. I note that Keyhoe's book is also a source in that article. More recently I have spoken of the incorporation of her fears of radiation contamination as a source of some of the medical imagery (*Magonia Monthly Supplement* No. 12, February 1999). There are numerous origins - emphasis on the plural - to her experience.

Greg Sandow, in his essay 'The Abduction Conundrum' (*Anomalist* No. 7, Winter 98/99, and Sandow's personal web site) offers another sort of criticism. He indicates I am 'completely unaware of how silly' I sound when I point out some of the elements of abduction stories appeared in earlier science fiction. He grants that anybody could 'cherry pick' old issues of *Amazing Stories* and emerge with elements of the abduction story. His complaint is that I don't explain how they come together in the current storyline of abductions being taken throughout a person's life and using us sexually without explaining their designs upon us. I'm engaged in 'vulgar' Gotcha-type thinking, he proposes. 'Kottmeyer doesn't make predictions from his theory, doesn't give us any way to separate abduction tales that might be influenced by media from those that wouldn't be. Besides . . . the science fiction details could be veiled abduction memories.'

The concession that one can find the abduction elements in earlier culture forgets that it was the Hopkins claim that one could not find those elements in earlier culture that was being disproven. One doesn't need to have a theory, amateur or professional, to prove such a point. Sandow takes no notice that if he alleges early science fiction stories are veiled abduction memories, he is undercutting the framework of interpretation that Jacobs, Hopkins, and Bullard were using, i.e. the aliens arrived in 1947 or thereabouts and nothing in earlier culture existed because they were elsewhere. Strike out that assumption and their claims of novelty have no point, let alone force.

In speaking of my not providing an explanation of the present storyline, particularly the part about the abductors not explaining themselves, Sandow is clearly parroting an argument made by Jacobs in his book *Secret Life* (Fireside, 1992, p. 297). Sandow is saying I should have addressed in a

1990 essay an argument that did not even exist till two years later. Subsequent to reading Jacobs's book I did point out that some of this new argument was demonstrably false. There are film aliens that never explain themselves and many films have aliens interested in the subject of procreation. This was discussed in my May 1994 essay 'Spawn of Inseminoid' (*REALL News*, 2, 5). The storyline about abductees being taken throughout their lives is one I have not addressed largely because I was unaware anyone thought it truly a matter of interest. Indeed I was under the impression that this business of abductees being followed throughout their lives was an embarrassment because it is so clearly a new storyline that did not exist prior to Hopkins. It is inconsistent with the body of abductions that existed before he came on the scene.

Sandow wants a way to separate abductions influenced by media and those that are not. Easy. Have the abductees persuade the aliens to visit Seth Shostak and Stephen Jay Gould. Persuade the aliens to give them copies of their mission records, a universal translator, and a library of a hundred books dealing in depth with such matters as alien zoology, alien palaeontology, alien biochemistry, a medical text, art history, antique guides to show they are up and up on being from an alien civilization. If the mission records back the abduction claims then we will know which accounts were real and beyond influence. Failing that, there are always things like FBI room-sweeps for alien skin cells or scales, mass witnessing of crafts, instrumental records like videotaped intrusions that pass muster upon scrutiny by non-believers.

Sandow wants predictions. Jacobs's alien takeover by big bug aliens will not happen. The apocalypses seen by abductees and supported by Mack will not happen. Mainstream science will not enter ufology en masse and become convinced of the existence of aliens who are spying on humanity or using us as part of a hybrid programme. The general UFO culture will continue to manifest all manner of paranoid themes. The government, being unable to prove to ufologists they are not engaged in a massive cover-up, will provide no confessions.

On the matter of the general proposition that psychosocial theorists do not offer testable propositions, a position held by both Sandow and Brown, I remind critics here that my article 'Abduction: The Boundary-Deficit Hypothesis' (*Magonia* No. 32) predicted 'the final population of abduction claimants would be biased in favour of a high proportion of boundary-deficit personalities'. I subsequently pointed out that there is a test instrument developed by Ernest Hartmann that reliably discriminates between people with thin boundaries and those who have thick or normal boundaries (Kottmeyer, Martin, 'Testing the Boundaries', *Bulletin of Anomalous Experience*, 5, 4, August 1994). Low scores would falsify the hypothesis. David Ritchey subsequently gave the Boundary Questionnaire to 14 abductees. The average score was 305 ('Elephantology - The Science of Limiting Perception to a Single Aspect of a Large Object, Parts II & III', *Bulletin of Anomalous Experience*, 5, 6, December 1994, pp. 11-16). This was nicely in the range defined as thin-boundaried (Hartmann, Ernest, *Boundaries of the Mind*, Basic, 1991, p. 254).

Brown avers that 'hysteria is the foundation stone upon which the whole Psychosocial model is built'. This is untrue in regard to my thinking. Anyone who has followed my writings would more properly tend to regard as central my argument that paranoia underlies and shapes much of UFO belief. This would be solidly falsified if the ETH could be solidly verified in the ways mentioned above. Less definitively, it could be undermined in many theorists' eyes if tests like the MMPI were given to believers and the scores on the Pa (Paranoia) scale came out low. A look at studies of abductees - presumably UFO believers - however tend to show the Pa score above average. Sprinkle and Parnell gave two standard psychological tests to 225 people who reported UFO experiences. Both tests found moderately elevated scores on the Pa scale and those with communication experiences were significantly more elevated (Parnell, June O. and Sprinkle, R. Leo, 'Personality Characteristics of Persons who Claim UFO Experiences', *Journal of UFO Studies*, n.s. 2 (1990), pp. 45-58). Rodeghier, Goodpaster, and Blatterbauer got a Pa score consistent within less than a point to Parnell and Sprinkle when they gave the MMPI to 27 abductees (Rodeghier, Mark, Goodpaster, Jeff and Blatterbauer, Sandra, 'Psychosocial Characteristics of Abductees: Results from the CUFOS Abduction Project', *Journal of UFO Studies*, n.s. 3 (1991), pp. 59-90). Those who adopt the ETH position of course shrug this off with an interpretation along the lines of - I admit this is caricature - 'Well, you'd be paranoid too if aliens were coming repeatedly in the night, sticking needles up your nose, and stealing your sperm, ova, or embryo to make hybrids to save their dying race.' How does one argue against that?

Obviously, you don't. Instead you move on to do a history of the Greys and show their origins in discarded theories of evolution and pulp science fiction. Brown tells us that this teaches us nothing people did not already know. Well, I contend it has! - if I may borrow his exclamation mark for a moment. Hopkins, Jacobs, Mack, indeed no abduction researcher has offered a history of the Grey

concept in their writings so this is new knowledge no matter how deep in denial Brown chooses to be. The fact that Hufford, whom Brown suggests we should emulate, was interested in clinical details like sleep paralysis rather than the origins and inconsistencies of the surface content of Old Hag experiences only tells us Hufford was already satisfied that nobody would challenge the axiom that Old Hags were obviously not physically sitting on people's chests. Being able to say that Greys are almost certainly fictional rather than real is clearly relevant in deciding if the paranoia is of the aliens-are-truly-victimizing-me sort or distrust-skews-how-I-interpret-weird-things sort. I don't know that this makes any difference to clinicians. I'm not a doctor nor do I pretend to be. Clearly, though, many people watching this phenomenon are still curious to know whether abduction experiences signify something that we should be worried about as a real threat to humanity or whether they are a tragically false belief we should hope people will eventually wake up from.

I do not plan to offer any grand unifying theories of abduction experiences in the near future of the sort that will solve all the things Sandow demands and will demand of psychosocial theory. Such is impossible without compelling grand unifying theories of dreams and nightmares to build on, or compelling grand unifying theories of mythology, or compelling grand unifying theories of cultural obsessions. I do know a thing or two, however, about recognising false beliefs and fallacious arguments. My curiosity indicated certain directions for explaining these errors of belief and I continue to believe my contributions to psychosocial thought have merit. That some readers reject and malign these ideas is unfortunate, but life is diverse and universal agreement on anything does not happen even among the angels (Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Lucifer*, Cornell, 1984, pp. 36, 44. Angels and humans, unlike aliens, occasionally tire of being servants, or so I'm told). I continue to hope thoughtful people will catch on that this phenomenon will likely continue to have no happy resolution for all concerned. If you have a need to be of service to humanity, pick a pursuit more certain to serve good like life-guarding, fire fighting, medicine, engineering, auto manufacture, farming, et cetera. Keep your options open if you must, but diversify your interests to include things that will ultimately be less a waste of your time, money, and emotional investment.

Time will not only tell who is right in these matters; to a large extent it already has.

'Keep your eyes a little wide and blank' - Dr Miles Bennell's instructions on how to look like a pod person, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956)

LITERARY CRITICISM

Timothy Good. *Unearthly Disclosure: Conflicting Interests in the Control of Extraterrestrial Intelligence*, Century, London, 2000. £16.99

As usual, Timothy Good regales us with some interesting UFO yarns. His technique must now be familiar to most readers. Take some sensational reports, then select accounts of investigations by the more credulous researchers. The work of more sceptical and probing investigators is ignored or brushed aside. Of course Good takes the trouble to make contact with many witnesses and investigators and - surprise, surprise - most of them tell him what he wants to hear.

Even Good's boundless credulity is strained on occasion, though. He devotes three chapters to the absurd stories told by the contactee Enrique Castillo Rincón about his encounters with Nordics from the Pleiades, admits that they are unbelievable, but concludes somewhat lamely: 'Most probably his narrative is a mixture of truth and fiction. Whatever the case, he has provided us with a fascinating story and one which I believe contains important new insights.' He doesn't give us any indication of what these insights might be, of course, and such remarks are typical of his incisive analysis of UFO narratives. But perhaps he is reluctant to indulge in 'literary criticism'.

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